



TUCFA NEWS AND VIEWS

OCTOBER 2025

Table of Contents

President’s Column.....1

Celebration for Past President.....3

News from TUCFA.....4

News from CAUT and other Faculty Associations.....7

Events.....8

Questions from Members.....9

Members’ Views.....11

Department Representatives.....14

Board of Directors.....16

Contact TUCFA.....17

Editors

Christopher Sears - Executive Officer-at-Large (Communications)

Marie-Andrée Bergeron - Member, Board of Directors

TUCFA Staff

Daniel Tseghay - Communications and Member Engagement Officer

Jennifer Garrison - Executive Director

President's Column



Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of News and Views and my first message to you as the 28th President of the University of Calgary Faculty Association (TUCFA). I am honoured to be leading TUCFA, your union, over the next three years and look forward to representing, supporting, and advocating for the interests of all members.

This time of year – a transition from summer to winter – reveals itself in autumn colours and the “fall” of leaves, and a reminder that a new season is on the way. TUCFA is also undergoing considerable change to bring about a new season in our union – one that is member-driven and engaged. A new logo and colour scheme are now in place, both of which were selected by the Board of Directors to reflect a revitalized union after many decades of status quo.

TUCFA's first strategic plan is in development, led by our Vice President, Leighton Wilks, and Oleksiy Osiyevskyy (both of whom are members of Haskayne School of Business), and is expected to be finalized over the coming months, with an anticipated launch at our Annual General Meeting of members in the new year. The strategic plan will serve as a roadmap to achieving our long-term goals and the revitalization of our union.



Left to right: Oleksiy Osiyevskyy, Dora Tam, Chris Sears. Photo Credit: Daniel Tseghay

TUCFA has a new Executive Team and several additions to our Board of Directors as of July 1st. This was reported to you in the June edition of Academic Views. Since then, the Board voted to appoint Trevor Tombe (Faculty of Arts) as Treasurer (as of September 1st) and Leighton Wilks (Haskayne School of Business) as Vice President. (Note that these two positions were formerly one position). This completes the makeup of the Executive team for the next two years.

Pursuant to the Post-secondary Learning Act, the Minister of Advanced Education has approved our nominee to the Board of Governors, Bart Beaty (Faculty of Arts). He will serve a three-year term. Five members have agreed to represent TUCFA as Directors of the CAUT Defence Fund: Myles Leslie (Cumming School of Medicine), Chris Sears (Faculty of Arts), Dora Tam (Faculty of Social Work), Melanee Thomas (Faculty of Arts), and Justine Wheeler (Libraries and Cultural Resources).

TUCFA is preparing a new communications strategy, under the direction of Chris Sears, Executive Officer-at-Large (Communications). This will transform TUCFA's website and social media platforms in the coming months. As the sixth-largest Association in the country, our online presence will ultimately reflect that stature. You'll notice that Chris Sears and Marie-Andrée Bergeron (Faculty of Arts) are the co-editors of News & Views, and they work closely with Daniel Tseghay, Communications and Member Engagement Officer.

As part of our new plan to engage members from different groups within our union, Justine Wheeler, Executive Officer-at-Large, is leading another new portfolio: Administrative and Professional Academics / Sessional Instructors. With the help of Rosalind Carson, sessional instructor representative on TUCFA's Board of Directors, several information meetings for sessional instructors are being scheduled, the first one took place virtually on October 9th and was well attended. Plans to engage with other administrative and professional members of TUCFA are also underway. We are also in the early stages of assembling a new team to assist in organizing and promoting member engagement across the university, including plans for social events for all TUCFA members.

These developments are just the beginning of a series of meaningful and significant changes that began under the leadership of J. Kent Donlevy, our Past President. In honour of his contributions and service to our union, the Board of Directors held a special luncheon celebration last month and awarded him a plaque to commemorate his achievements (see page 3).

In my role as TUCFA's President, I commit to building a union driven by member engagement, with a focus on better working conditions for all academic staff. I look forward to sharing more updates in future editions of News & Views.

Sending my very best wishes to all,

Francine G. Smith, Ph.D.
President, TUCFA

Celebration for Past President

We thanked Dr. J. Kent Donlevy, Past President of TUCFA (2023-2025), in recognition of his exceptional leadership and service to the Association.



*J. Kent Donlevy with Lindsay McLaren (left) and Myles Leslie (right) in background.
Photo Credit: Denis Onen.*



*Francine Smith and J. Kent Donlevy.
Photo Credit: Denis Onen.*

News from TUCFA

Matters in Arts – an Update

TUCFA has filed an Unfair Labour Practice complaint with the Alberta Labour Relations Board, alleging the university administration has targeted and intimidated faculty members for their union activities.

The complaint, filed on June 23rd, stems from a workplace investigation launched by the university. TUCFA alleges the investigation involved improper questioning of members regarding their advocacy against recent program closures in the Faculty of Arts.

Some members who were actively involved in challenging the program suspensions were subsequently subjected to an investigation. The complaint alleges this investigation was used as a reprisal and an intimidation tactic designed to silence dissent, a violation of the Alberta Labour Relations Code. “This advocacy is a core, protected form of union activity,” said Jennifer Garrison, Executive Director of TUCFA. “And we want every member to know that you are protected when you stand up for collegial governance and for your rights as a union member.”

The members subjected to the investigation were responding to concerns over the Faculty of Arts’ “curriculum renewal” process, which has paused admissions to, and which could ultimately threaten closure of, numerous programs. TUCFA has filed grievances over the program suspensions, alleging that the lack of full and extensive consultation constitutes a violation of the Collective Agreement.

TUCFA will continue to support our members who have concerns about program suspensions because they deserve to be consulted on issues that affect their job security and academic activities.



*UofC. Photo Credit:
Getty Images*

TUCFA reaches Four-Year Collective Agreement with Board of Governors

TUCFA reached a four-year Collective Agreement with the Board of Governors in July, concluding negotiations that began in early 2024. The new collective agreement does not incorporate all the modifications and improvements we were seeking, but it does mark progress in several key areas. “The bargaining team acknowledges the collective effort that made these improvements possible, recognizing that they lay the foundation for continued organizing to push for further progress in the next round,” said Trevor Tombe, Principal Negotiator.



Jackie Seidel, TUCFA Member. Photo Credit: Daniel Tseghay

The new agreement includes 3% annual salary increases for ongoing academic staff, with additional rank-based PTR adjustments that will produce cumulative salary increases of 16% to 24%. Sessional instructors will see a meaningful 21% increase in minimum salary rates over the term of the agreement. The new agreement also includes improved benefits, including expanded mental health coverage. Non-monetary improvements to the Emeriti process, tenure and promotion processes, and parental leave policies, among others, were also agreed to.

One outstanding item for the Association is the incorporation of improved workload language into the collective agreement. While discussed extensively during negotiations, no agreement was reached, and this will be a focus of our efforts during future negotiations.

For a full summary of the key elements of the new collective agreement, please refer to the email sent by TUCFA on July 10th. We have been informed that salary increases (including retroactive increases) will appear on November 10 pay statements. The full text of the new collective agreement will be available on the TUCFA website soon.

TUCFA President Welcomes New Academic Staff

Francine G. Smith, President of TUCFA, officially welcomed new academic staff at the University's annual academic orientation on August 26th. Her presentation emphasized the power of a collective voice in shaping our workplace.

Speaking on behalf of TUCFA, which represents all academic staff at the University, she outlined its core mission: to ensure members are heard and respected, to protect member rights, and to ensure fair and equitable working conditions.

"You join a collective voice dedicated to ensuring our perspectives are heard in decisions that shape our workplace," said Smith. "We are committed to fostering an environment where academic freedom and collegial governance can flourish."

The President encouraged new members to become engaged by attending town halls, reading union communications, volunteering for TUCFA committees, and serving as Department Representatives.

She concluded by inviting new academic staff to visit the TUCFA office on the 14th floor of the Education Tower for support, resources, and confidential conversations, reinforcing her message that an engaged membership is essential for building a strong union.



Francine Smith, TUCFA President. Photo Credit: Daniel Tseghay

News from CAUT and other Faculty Associations

Dalhousie Faculty Association Ratifies New Agreement After Lockout

The Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) has ratified a new agreement with the university administration, bringing an end to a six-week lockout that began on August 20th.

The lockout, which barred over 1,000 academic staff from their workplaces and campuses, drew national attention and widespread condemnation from the academic community across Canada. The University's decision to lock out its faculty – only the 3rd lockout of academic staff in Canada – disrupted the start of the fall semester and created significant uncertainty for students.

The agreement brings an end to a labour dispute that centered on issues with wages, job security, and workload protections. These are struggles experienced by faculty associations across the country, and TUCFA was proud to be among the many associations who came out in solidarity with DFA.

“I joined the picket lines twice to show these locked-out workers that they weren’t alone, that their struggle is also ours,” said Melanee Thomas (Faculty of Arts), a member of TUCFA’s Board of Directors. Melanee delivered a cheque for \$1,500 from TUCFA to the DFA, a tangible contribution to their strike fund. “I want to be clear: it’s simply unconscionable that a U15 administration would lock out academic staff two weeks before the start of the semester while they were in the middle of voting on the contract offer.”



Melanee Thomas, TUCFA Board Member.

Another member of the Board of Directors, Justine Wheeler (Libraries and Cultural Resources), also joined the picket lines with a separate cheque for \$1,500 from TUCFA in hand, to show our support and solidarity.

“We’re in this together, as academic staff, across the country,” said Wheeler.

Events



Intro To Your Union

Date: Nov. 5, 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.; Nov. 6, 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Location: TUCFA Boardroom, Education Tower, 1430

Email to RSVP: faculty.association@tucfa.com

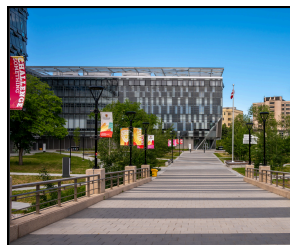


Fair Employment Week

Date: Oct. 22, drop in between 10 a.m. and 1p.m.; and Oct. 23, drop in between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Location: TUCFA Boardroom, Education Tower, 1430

An opportunity to discuss precarious employment and to organize to improve working conditions of our sessional appointees who are our contract academic staff.



Department Representative Meeting

Date: Nov. 20, 12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Location: Hybrid. Details to be provided.

Questions from Members

Answered by **TUCFA's** Executive Director, Jennifer Garrison, PhD

Question: "I teach one course as a sessional instructor. Am I a full TUCFA member?"

Answer:

Yes, you are! All TUCFA members have the same voting rights under the Association by-laws, are covered under the Collective Agreement, and are entitled to union representation. Our membership includes Professors, Professors (Teaching), Associate Professors, Associate Professors (Teaching), Assistant Professors, Assistant Professors (Teaching), Sessional Instructors, Professional Librarians, Archivists, Curators in Libraries and Cultural Resources, Counsellors in the Student Wellness Services, Heads of academic departments, Associate Deans, Assistant Deans, and others. If you pay dues to TUCFA, you are a full member.

Question: "I'm an Associate Dean. Am I a TUCFA member or am I a manager?"

Answer:

You are a TUCFA member. Associate Deans, along with other leadership positions such as Assistant Deans and Department Heads, are TUCFA members and are not considered management under the Collective Agreement.

Associate Deans often work closely with managers (e.g., Deans), but they don't have the same authority. For example, Associate Deans do not have the authority to perform managerial functions, such as disciplining another TUCFA member, participating in grievance processes on behalf of the University, or denying medical accommodations.

As a TUCFA member, during your appointment as Associate Dean you continue to benefit from clauses under the Collective Agreement, including "Article 6: Academic Freedom". You are also entitled to union representation. If you are ever unsure of your rights under the Collective Agreement, please contact the Faculty Association office. We'd be happy to assist with the nuances of this sometimes difficult-to-navigate leadership position.

Question: “How TUCFA operates and what it does is a mystery to me. How can I learn more or get involved?”

Answer:

We hear this a lot, and we’re working to change that. The Faculty Association staff will be holding regular “Intro to Your Union” sessions beginning this fall, to answer your questions about what TUCFA is and does and how to get involved. These sessions are for all members—whether you’re just beginning your appointment or considering retirement. The first two dates are **November 5, 12 p.m. - 1 p.m. and November 6, 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.** Email the Association office **faculty.association@tucfa.com** to register.

Many of the Department Representative positions are currently vacant (see page 14), and we encourage members to volunteer for these important roles. Members can also volunteer to serve on committees and stand for election as a Board member. Two of the most important things you can do are to inform yourself of your rights under the Collective Agreement and to regularly talk to your fellow members about your working conditions. An informed, engaged, and organized membership is the source of our union’s power at the bargaining table and beyond.



TUCFA Members (left to right): Elizabeth Rohlman, Lindsay McLaren, Aubrey J. Hanson, and Jackie Seidel in solidarity with ATA. Photo Credit: Daniel Tseghay.

Members' Views

Our Schools Are in Crisis. Silence Will Not Protect Us.

Tonya Callaghan, Professor in the Werklund School of Education



*Tonya Callaghan. Photo
Credit: Daniel Tseghay*

A battle is being waged in Alberta's K-12 schools, its stakes are nothing less than the lives of our most vulnerable youth and the very soul of public education, and we as academics have a responsibility to show our solidarity.

The current provincial government's targeted anti-LGBTQ2S+ laws – from instituting rules around students' names and pronouns to banning transgender girls from taking part in K-12 sport – are not isolated issues. They are a part of a concerted effort to respect the human rights only of some humans and actively oppress LGBTQ2S+ people. Now, there's the spectre of

the Alberta premier joining Saskatchewan's premier in using the Charter's notwithstanding clause to protect from legal scrutiny three of Alberta's laws that affect transgender people. This creates a crisis that demands the attention of every Albertan, especially those of us with the academic freedom to intervene. As poet and civil rights activist Maya Angelou warned, none of us can be free until all of us are free.

The government presents these policies as safeguarding supposed "parental rights," but only the rights of some parents, and certainly not the parents of transgender children. What about the rights of the child? Singling out transgender girls and other gender non-conforming children is a form of discrimination that violates several articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Canada ratified in 1991 and is bound by international law to uphold. Creating laws that prohibit physicians from providing gender-affirming care such as puberty blockers and hormone therapy for young people under the age of 16 violates the Convention's basic principles of non-discrimination, acting in the best interests of the child, and the right to life and development.

These punitive policies are a state-sanctioned erasure of a child's identity. To force a teacher to disregard a student who wishes to be called by a new name or pronoun is a profound act of disrespect. It tells that young person that who they are is not valid. I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that these anti-trans policies can become a matter of life and death. When a young person is denied their identity, the consequences can be severe: profound isolation, depressive feelings, and suicidal ideation. These policies are a direct attack on the mental health and well-being of non-binary and transgender children, a group that is already misunderstood and maligned.

This attack extends beyond the classroom into the school library. The organized effort to remove books with LGBTQ2S+ themes, often by groups that haven't even read them, inflicts enormous costs on every student. For queer youth, these books are a lifeline, a way of turning mirrors into windows, showing them they are not alone and that a future is possible. For their peers, these stories are a way of seeing the diversity of human experience, fostering empathy and understanding. In education circles, we talk about the "null curriculum" – what is intentionally left out of the prescribed curriculum is often more revealing about a culture than what it chooses to include in the curriculum. The absence of information about gender and sexuality diversity in schools shows that some people are not worth learning about, and their stories are not welcome here. This is censorship designed to manufacture ignorance and fear.

Disturbingly, these cultural battles are unfolding alongside the teachers' strike, and the two are inextricably linked. While the strike is fundamentally about untenable classroom conditions like overcrowding, a lack of support for complex student needs, and insufficient pay, the government's focus on anti-LGBTQ2S+ policies is a blatant distraction tactic. It's an attempt to have us all look at this shiny object over here rather than pay attention to their concerted attempts to dismantle and destabilize public education. They would rather we fight a culture war than notice and address the crumbling infrastructure of our public institutions.



Inclusive school. Photo credit: Getty Images

This is why faculty at the post-secondary level, and indeed all Albertans, must pay attention. The struggle in K-12 is our struggle. The injustice facing a transgender student in a Calgary classroom or a teacher managing 45 students in a room built for 30 is an injustice to us all. The erosion of workers' rights in one sector inevitably seeps into others. The government's playbook is clear: target a marginalized group, co-opt social justice language, create division, and dismantle public trust to pave the way for privatization and further control. We must see these interconnected issues – censorship, workers' rights, and educational equity – as facets of the same fight for a just society.

The call to action, then, is clear. We must move beyond stunned silence. As lesbian poet and theoretician Audre Lorde famously warned, “your silence will not protect you.” We must know our rights and demand that they are respected. We must stand firmly in solidarity, not because we are all directly affected, but because we recognize our shared humanity. This means supporting our K-12 colleagues on the picket lines, speaking up against bigoted policies in our communities, and using our voices to call out oppression wherever we see it.

We must see through the government's distractions and focus on what truly matters: creating schools where every child is safe, respected, and able to learn, and where the educators who guide them are valued and supported. The future of our province depends on it. As Martin Luther King Jr. famously observed, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere, and this threat is currently knocking at the doors of our schools.

The views of the writer are not necessarily the views of TUCFA. We invite members to submit their ideas for a Member Views contribution to Daniel Tseghay, Communications and Membership Engagement Officer (daniel.tseghay@tucfa.com).

Department Representatives

The Association thanks the following individuals for serving as Department Representatives in their units.

List of Department Representatives ~ as of October 07, 2025

Art & Art History	Trevor Stark
Biochemistry & Molecular Biology	Janice Braun
Cardiac Sciences	Robert Sheldon
Cell Biology & Anatomy	Cam Teskey
Classics and Religion	Tinu Ruparell
Clinical Neurosciences	Davide Martino
Community Health Sciences	Aliya Kassam
Computer Science	Ben Stephenson
Critical Care Medicine	Paul Easton
Earth, Energy, and Environment	Rajeev Nair
Electrical & Software Engineering	Ann Barcomb
Emergency Medicine	Eddie Lang
English	Rebecca Sullivan
Haskayne School of Business	Pablo Moran
History	Beau Cleland
Kinesiology	Nicole Culos-Reed
Law	Maureen Duffy
Libraries & Cultural Resources	Heather Ganshorn
Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering	Abdulmajeed Mohamad
Medicine	Paul Gibson
Microbiology, Immunology & Infectious Disease	Cameron Semper
Nursing	Kara Sealock
Pathology & Laboratory Medicine	Lawrence de Koning
Philosophy	Allen Habib
Physics & Astronomy	Sean Stotyn
Physiology & Pharmacology	Ken Lukowiak
Political Science	Erica Rayment
Psychology	Adam Murry
School of Creative & Performing Arts	Christine Brubaker
School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures & Cultures	Ben Whaley
Social Work	Yahya El-Lahib
Sociology	Lucy Harry
Student Experience and Support	Rob Elleker
Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning	Jaclyn Carter
Werklund School of Education	Jackie Seidel

There are no Department Representatives for the following Faculties, Departments, or Units. Please contact TUCFA if you are interested in serving in this capacity.

Anesthesiology, Perioperative & Pain Medicine
Anthropology and Archaeology
Biological Sciences
Biomedical Engineering
Chemical & Petroleum Engineering
Chemistry
Civil Engineering
Communication, Media & Film
Economics
Family Medicine
Geography
Geomatics Engineering
Mathematics & Statistics
Medical Genetics
Native Centre
Obstetrics & Gynaecology
Oncology
Protected Disclosure & Research Integrity Office
Paediatrics
Psychiatry
Radiology
School of Architecture, Planning & Landscape
Surgery
Veterinary Medicine

Board of Directors

Officers

Francine Smith (Cumming School of Medicine), President and Chair of the Board

Leighton Wilks (Haskayne School of Business), Vice-President

Trevor Tombe (Faculty of Arts), Treasurer

Tavis Campbell (Faculty of Arts), Grievance Advisor

Karen Then (Faculty of Nursing), Grievance Advisor

Chris Sears (Faculty of Arts), Executive Officer-at-Large

Justine Wheeler (Libraries and Cultural Resources), Executive Officer-at-Large

Members

Teri Balser (Faculty of Science)

Bart Beaty (Faculty of Arts)

Marie-Andrée Bergeron (Faculty of Arts)

Rosalind Carson (Werklund School of Education)

Jennifer Garrison (TUCFA Executive Director)

Myles Leslie (Cumming School of Medicine)

Lindsay McLaren (Cumming School of Medicine)

Denis Onen (Schulich School of Engineering)

Dora Tam (Faculty of Social Work)

Melanee Thomas (Faculty of Arts)

Nicole Wyatt (Faculty of Arts)

Contact TUCFA

The TUCFA office is open Monday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (closed between 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. for lunch). TUCFA employees work a hybrid schedule; the office is usually closed on Fridays, but staff are available by telephone and email.

Please come by the office to meet the President or Executive Director and other TUCFA employees.

Two-way communication with our TUCFA employees is encouraged. If you have any concerns or questions about your academic activities, please connect with us. When a union member contacts the Association by telephone or email, they will reach a TUCFA employee who will treat the matter or query with the utmost confidentiality.

TUCFA staff are not University of Calgary employees.

Elected Executive Officers and members of the Board of Directors may be informed of confidential information only when necessary, due to their fiduciary responsibility to the Association.

✉ faculty.association@tucfa.com

☎ [403.220.5722](tel:403.220.5722)



University of Calgary. Photo Credit: TUCFA Website